

New Jersey Institute of Technology

STS 221-003: Introduction to Sociology

Fall 2024

Instructor: Lauren Manley, MSW, MS

Contact: lm553@njit.edu

Office Hours: Mondays from 2:30-3:30 at Cullimore 332; if you are not available during this time, please email me to set up a Zoom meeting

Course Meeting Time and Location:

Monday/Thursday from 1:00-2:20 PM at Central King Building 330

Course Description:

This course introduces sociology through familiarization with major sociological theories, topics, and approaches, while encouraging students to apply a sociological way of thinking to the world around them. Across all class sections, there is a focus on the processes that create and sustain inequalities and the ways they can be challenged.

Course Objectives:

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Explain major sociological theories, topics, and approaches
- Identify relationships between the individual and society
- Understand and examine current events and social issues from a sociological perspective

Prerequisites: None

Course Grading: This course includes both in- and out- of class components to facilitate learning. All assignments and any changes to the schedule will be posted on Canvas. The following is a breakdown of how you will be assessed.

- **Class Attendance (5% of course grade):** Students are expected to attend each class session and a record will be kept via a sign-in sheet. Late arrival of more than 15 minutes without prior notification will be counted as an absence, unless there are extenuating circumstances. Students may have two unexcused absences without it impacting their course grade. Starting with the third unexcused absence, every unexcused absence past that will result in a one-point reduction in the attendance portion of your final grade (i.e., 3 absences = 9/10, 4 absences = 8/10, 5 absences = 7/10, etc.). Missing class for sickness, commitments to a university sports team or university-sponsored travel, or for another valid reason, *if communicated to me ahead of time*, will not factor into your absence count.
- **Class Participation (5% of course grade):** Our class time is the opportunity to actively engage with the material we are exploring; thus, participation during class is crucial because it is an important avenue for learning. I encourage you to be active in every class session through discussion, group activities, and asking questions. However, I understand that we all have different levels of comfort regarding speaking in class. Participation will thus be counted as speaking to the whole group, in smaller groups, and completing in-class activities. If you are fully engaged in at least two of those three activities, you will earn full points. If you have concerns about class participation, please contact me.
- **Weekly Quizzes (10 quizzes, worth a total of 20% of course grade):** A short weekly quiz will be available on Canvas on select weeks (indicated in the course schedule below). These quizzes will open at the end of Thursday classes and close on the following Monday at noon; the quizzes must be taken during this time frame. If you cannot access the quiz during this time frame for a valid reason, please let me know. The quizzes will be open-book and will assess your comprehension of class material from the last week. Please do not share answers on the quizzes or complete them as a group. Quizzes will be graded in a timely manner, and you will also be provided with your current overall quiz grade by November 11 (university add/drop date). Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.
- **Midterm Exam (20% of grade):** You will take an in-person midterm exam during Week 8; the exam will include material from Weeks 1 through 7. The midterm exam will

be a combination of multiple-choice and short answer questions covering material from the first seven weeks of the course. You will be asked to recall key terms and to apply concepts analytically and comparatively.

- **Final Exam (20% of grade):** You will be taking an in-person final exam that covers any new material covered since the midterm exam; the exam will be a combination of multiple-choice, short answer, and essay questions. The exam date/time will align with the university's official final exam schedule.
- **Reflection Essay (20%):** You will write an essay (minimum 1000 words) describing one way in which you can apply a sociological concept or theory to your everyday life or intended career. A grading rubric for this assignment will be provided to you after the midterm exam.
- **Reflection Presentation (10%):** You will present a 5-10 minute presentation summarizing your reflection essay to the class. A grading rubric for this assignment will be provided to you after the midterm exam.
- **Extra credit (extra 5% of course grade):** There will be an optional extra-credit essay assignment due in Week 13, worth up to 20 points. These points will be applied to your lowest exam grade (either the midterm or the final exam) and can potentially bring your total exam grade above 100%. This extra-credit assignment can contribute up to 5% to your overall class grade, making it a valuable opportunity for those whose final grade is on the borderline between two letter grades. More details about this project will be provided after the midterm exam grades are released.

Grading Scale:

A = 90-100

B+ = 87-90

B = 80-87

C+ = 77-80

C = 70-77

D = 60-70

F = <60

Textbook: Introduction to Sociology 3e by OpenStax

(<https://openstax.org/details/books/introduction-sociology-3e>). Please note that a free PDF version of the textbook and audiobook recordings of all chapters are available from the “Student Resources” section of OpenStax. The PDF of the textbook is also available on canvas.

Course Schedule and Readings:

Week 1 (September 5) - Introduction and Syllabus

- No pre-class readings or assignments

Week 2 (Sep 9 and 12) - Chap 1: An Introduction to Sociology and Chap 2: Research

- *Note – Sep. 9 last day for add/drop class*
- Extra reading: Dickie, G. 2020. Why polls were mostly wrong. Scientific American. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-polls-were-mostly-wrong/>
- **Quiz 1 assigned**

Week 3 (Sep 16 and 19) - Chap 3: Culture & Chap 4: Society and Social Interaction

- Extra reading: McCluney, C. L, Robotham, K., Lee, S., Smith, R., & Durkee, M. (2019). *The costs of code-switching*. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2019/11/the-costs-of-codeswitching>
- Please read textbook page 97 and 98 (Inayah’s story)
- **Quiz 2 assigned**

Week 4 (Sep 23 and 26) - Chap 5: Socialization & Chap. 6: Groups and Organizations

- Extra reading: UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). (2023, June 12). *2023 Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI): Breaking down gender biases: Shifting social norms towards gender equality*. <https://hdr.undp.org/content/2023-gender-social-norms-index-gsni#/indicies/GSNI>
- **Quiz 3 assigned**

Week 5 (Sep 30 and Oct 3) - Chap 7: Deviance and Social Control

- Extra reading: Innocence Project (n.d.). *DNA Exonerations in the United States (1989 – 2020)*. <http://www.innocenceproject.org/free-innocent/improve-the-law/fact-sheets/dna-exonerations-nationwide>
- **Quiz 4 assigned**

Week 6 (Oct 7 and 10) - Chap 8: Media and Technology & Chap 9: Social Stratification

- Extra reading: Brown, M.A., Nagler, J., Bisbee, J., & Tucker, J.A. (2022, October 12). *Echo chambers, rabbit holes, and ideological bias: How YouTube recommends content to real users*. Brookings Institute. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/echo-chambers-rabbit-holes-and-ideological-bias-how-youtube-recommends-content-to-real-users/>
- Extra reading: Fuhrer, J. (2023, October, 10). The myth of meritocracy runs deep in American history. The MIT Press. <https://thereader.mitpress.mit.edu/the-myth-of-meritocracy-runs-deep-in-american-history/>
- Quiz 5 assigned

Week 7 (Oct 14 and 17) - Chap 11: Race and Ethnicity & Chap 12: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality

- Extra reading: Davies, D. (2023, March 28). *How poverty and racism 'weather' the body, accelerating aging and disease*. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2023/03/28/1166404485/weathering-arline-geronimus-poverty-racism-stress-health>

Week 8 (Oct 21 and 24) - Midterm & Chap 13: Aging and the Elderly

- Midterm during class on October 21

Week 9 (Oct 28 and 31) - Chap 14: Relationships, Marriage, and Family & Chap 15: Religion

- Quiz 6 assigned

Week 10 (Nov 4 and 7) - Chap 16: Education & Chap 17: Government and Politics

- Extra reading: American Psychological Association. (n.d.). Education and socioeconomic Status. <https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/education>
- Quiz 7 assigned

Week 11 (Nov 11 and 14) - Chap 18: Work and the Economy & Chap 19: Health and Medicine

- Note – Nov 11 last day to withdraw from class
- We will complete a class exercise using the online data analysis tools here: <https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/web/pages/instructors/ddlgs/guides/americanream/index.html>
- Extra reading: Skim the article: Braveman, P., & Gottlieb, L. (2014). The social determinants of health: it's time to consider the causes of the causes. *Public health reports (Washington, D.C. : 1974)*, 129 Suppl 2(Suppl 2), 19–31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00333549141291S206>
- Quiz 8 assigned

Week 12 (Nov 18 and 21) - Chap 20: Population and Environment & Chap. 10 Global Inequality

- Quiz 9 assigned

Week 13 (Nov 25) - Chap. 21: Social Movements and Social Change

- Note – No class on Nov 28 (Thanksgiving recess)
- Optional extra-credit assignment due

Week 14 (Dec 2 and 5) - Individual Presentations

- Quiz 10 assigned

Week 15 (Dec 9) - Last Class - Individual Presentations

- Final exam will be scheduled in line with the university's final exam schedule; TBD

Policies:

Attendance: Attendance is required on lecture days; a sign-in sheet will be available for the first 30 minutes of each class. Please communicate with me *ahead of time* if you will be missing class for a valid reason.

Make-Up Exams: If you miss an exam for a valid reason, please contact me to schedule a make-up exam through the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences.

University Policy on Academic Integrity: Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at: NJIT Academic Integrity Code.

Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu

Accessibility: This class is intended to be fully available to all students regardless of health or ability status. If you need reasonable accommodations to complete the course because of a disability, you can reach out to the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (<https://www.njit.edu/accessibility>).

Use of Generative AI: Student use of artificial intelligence (AI) is permitted in this course for certain assignments and activities. It is not permitted to be used in the midterm and final exams, as doing so would undermine student learning and achievement of course learning outcomes: understanding and examining current events and social issues from a sociological perspective. Additionally, when students use AI in this course, the AI must be cited as is shown within the NJIT Library AI citation page for AI. I encourage you to use AI to inspire new ideas and perspectives and build on the knowledge you are learning in class. However, do not directly copy and paste text from AI (ex: using it to write your essays), and do not forget that you need to analyze and evaluate all AI-generated information for accuracy, reliability, and relevance, given that generated information is often imperfect. If you have any questions or concerns about AI technology use in this class, please reach out to me prior to submitting any assignments.

Questions? Please let me know.